

STORY 39.

ISLAMIC LAW IS NO RESPECTOR OF PERSONS.

THE prophet is reported to have said "Even if my daughter commits theft I will have her hand cut off."

Jabla was the Chief of the Arab tribe of Ghassan, who lived in Syria to the North of Arabia. Impressed by the glorious rise of Islam this Jabla came to (Hazrat) Omar and embraced Islam at his hands.

Once Jabla went on a pilgrimage. While performing the rites of the pilgrimage, the cloth which he wore around his shoulders slipped off and one end of it trailed on the ground behind him. A poor Muslim happened to be going just behind him, so that by chance he put his foot on the cloth. Jabla took this trifling incident as an intentional affront and lost his temper. The poor man explained that it was only an accident and that he had meant no disrespect to the great man. But Jabla who was an incarnation of Arab loftiness and whom the humility taught by Islam had not yet touched would not be appeased by these protests of innocence and in a fit of rage struck the poor Muslim.

When the pilgrimage was over the poor man complained to the Caliph who at once sent for Jabla. After a brief talk Jabla admitted that he had struck the man, but excused himself on the

ground that he was King and had been insulted.

Omar told him that he had no right to take the law into his own hands, that in Islam a King was not superior to the poorest Muslim, and that he must be prepared for punishment.

When Jabla heard this he was thunder-struck, and very strongly protested against the treatment he was receiving. But Omar said "Friend you have beaten a poor Muslim for no fault of his. According to the laws of Islam you must be punished, and nothing can save you from the punishment you deserve."

When Jabla saw that nothing could avert his disgrace and humiliation, he hit upon a trick to escape his fate, and requested the Caliph to give him one day's respite. The unsuspecting Caliph agreed. But during the night Jabla fled away with his friends, and joined the enemies of Islam in Syria.